



PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON REGION 25 (MONTANA) 700 MHZ REGIONAL PLAN

WT Docket No. 02-378

Comments Due: February 7, 2012

Reply Comments Due: February 17, 2012

Introduction. On August 22, 2011, the Region 25 (Montana)¹ 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee (RPC) (Region 25) submitted a proposed 700 MHz Public Safety Plan (Plan) for General Use² spectrum in the 769-775/799-805 MHz band for review and approval.³ In addition, on October 4, October 21, 2011, and January 12, 2012, Region 25 supplemented its Plan submission by providing Letters of Concurrence and Dispute Resolutions Agreements from its adjacent regions.

Background. The Commission established a structure to allow RPCs optimal flexibility to meet state and local needs, encourage innovative use of the spectrum, and accommodate new and as yet unanticipated developments in technology and equipment.⁴ The Commission's rules require each of the fifty-five (55) RPCs to submit its plan for the General Use spectrum.⁵ The Commission's role in relation

¹ The Region 25 (Montana) 700 MHz regional planning area includes all (56) counties in the State of Montana and seven federally recognized Native American Reservations: Assiniboine and Sioux-Fort Peck, Blackfeet Tribe, Chippewa-Cree-Rocky Boy, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Crow Tribe, Fort Belknap Indian Community, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. The Region shares 545 miles of border with Canada.

² The General Use spectrum is administered by RPCs and is licensed for public safety services on a site-by-site basis in accordance with the relevant Commission-approved regional plan and frequency coordination.

³ See Region 25 (Montana) 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee Plan to Federal Communications Commission, Office of the Secretary, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed August 22, 2011) (submitting regional plan); Letters of Concurrence (LOCs) from Region 12 (Idaho), Region 38 (South Dakota) and Region 46 (Wyoming) to Federal Communications Commission, Office of the Secretary, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed Oct. 4, 2011) ((submitting LOCs and Dispute Resolution Agreement (DRA)), and Letter of Concurrence from Region 32 (North Dakota) to Federal Communications Commission, Office of the Secretary, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed Oct. 31, 2011) (submitting LOCs); Dispute Resolution Agreements (DRAs) from Region 12 (Idaho) and Region 46 (Wyoming) to Federal Communications Commission, Office of the Secretary, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed Jan. 12, 2012) (submitting DRAs).

⁴ See Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communication Requirements Through the Year 2010, WT Docket No. 96-86, *First Report and Order and Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 14 FCC Rcd 152 (1998) (*First Report and Order*); *Second Memorandum Opinion and Order*, 15 FCC Rcd 16844 (2000). See also 47 C.F.R. § 90.527.

⁵ See 47 C.F.R. § 90.527. Each RPC must incorporate certain common elements into its 700 MHz plan. A list of 700 MHz RPCs and region activities is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/public-safety-spectrum/700-MHz/>.

to the RPCs is limited to (1) defining the regional boundaries; (2) requiring fair and open procedures, *i.e.*, requiring notice, opportunity for comment, and reasonable consideration; (3) specifying the elements that all regional plans must include; and (4) reviewing and accepting proposed plans (or amendments to approved plans) or rejecting them with an explanation.⁶

The Commission expects RPCs to ensure that their committees are representative of all public safety entities in their regions by providing reasonable notice of all meetings and deliberations. Further, regional plans must include an explanation of how all eligible entities within the region were given such notice.⁷ For the initial meeting, called by the convenor to form the RPC and hold elections, the Commission requires at least sixty days notice.⁸ In developing their regional plans, RPCs must ensure that their proposed plans comply with the rules and policies governing the 700 MHz public safety regional planning process.⁹ We also encourage the RPCs to consider utilizing the guidelines developed by the Public Safety National Coordination Committee (NCC).¹⁰ RPCs may approach the assignment of the spectrum differently, *e.g.*, by making specific assignments to eligible public safety entities, or by establishing an allotment pool approach based on political boundaries such as counties.

On July 31, 2007, the Commission adopted a *Second Report and Order* revising the rules governing wireless licenses in the 700 MHz band.¹¹ The Commission adopted a plan for the 700 MHz band to establish a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband communications network for the benefit of state and local public safety users. The Commission designated the lower half of the 700 MHz public safety band for broadband communications (763-768/793-798 MHz) and consolidated existing narrowband allocations in the upper half of the public safety 700 MHz band (769-775/799-805 MHz).

The Region 25 700 MHz Plan. The Region 25 Plan pre-allocates the consolidated narrowband General Use spectrum by county.¹² The Plan was coordinated with all four adjacent regions to Region 25 including: Region 12 (Idaho), Region 32 (North Dakota), Region 38 (South Dakota), and Region 46

⁶ *First Report and Order*, 14 FCC Rcd at 195 ¶ 87.

⁷ *Id.* at 193-94 ¶ 84. RPCs must promptly adopt operating procedures that “ensure that all entities will be given reasonable notice of all committee meetings and deliberations.” *Id.* at 195 ¶ 86.

⁸ *Id.* at 195 ¶ 86 & n.220.

⁹ 47 C.F.R. § 90.527; *see also First Report and Order*, 14 FCC Rcd at 190-96 ¶¶ 77-89.

¹⁰ The NCC was a federal advisory committee established by the Commission in 1999 to address and advise the Commission on operational and technical parameters for use of the 700 MHz public safety band. In addition, the NCC was tasked with providing voluntary assistance in the development of coordinated regional plans, and developed a *Regional Planning Guidebook*. Following the sunset of the NCC’s charter on July 25, 2003, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) agreed to continue to provide assistance to regional planners. A copy of the 700 MHz Regional Planning Guidebook is available at <http://www.npstc.org/nccsubcom.jsp>.

¹¹ Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band; Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010, PS Docket No. 06-229, WT Docket No. 96-86, *Second Report and Order*, 22 FCC Rcd 15289 (2007) (*Second Report and Order*).

¹² *See Plan*, Appendix G - Channel Allotment Plan at 40-57 (Region 25 defines a county-like area to include the geo-political boundaries of a given county plus 8 miles).

(Wyoming).¹³ We have reviewed the Region 25 Plan and find that it sufficiently complies with the applicable Commission rules and policies, and tentatively accept the Plan.

Prior to taking further action on the Plan, by this Public Notice, we solicit comments on the Region 25 Plan. Interested parties may file comments and reply comments in response to one or more of the listed waiver requests on or before the dates listed on the first page of this *Public Notice*. All comments and reply comments should reference the subject Plan and **WT Docket No. 02-378**. Parties may file comments using: (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies.¹⁴

- **Electronic Filers:** File comments electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, ECFS filers must transmit one electronic copy of the comments for each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." We will send a sample form and directions in response.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.

Send filings by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). Address filings to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- Deliver hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554 between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Use rubber bands or fasteners to hold deliveries together. Dispose of all envelopes before entering the building.
- Send commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- Send U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington DC 20554.

People with Disabilities: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (tty).

¹³ See Plan, Appendix C – Adjacent Region Concurrence Contacts and Letters; *see also* Plan, Appendix I - Inter-regional Dispute Resolution Agreements.

¹⁴ See *Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, GC Docket No. 97-113, Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 11322 (1998).

Address all filings to the Commission's Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554. Parties shall also serve one copy with the Commission's copy contractor, Best Copy and Printing, Inc. (BCPI), Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402, Washington, DC 20554, (202) 488-5300, or via e-mail to fcc@bcpiweb.com.

The Plan is available through ECFS at ecfs@fcc.gov. Region 25 Plan documents in **WT Docket No. 02-378** are available for public inspection and copying during business hours at the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th St. SW, Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. The documents may also be purchased from BCPI, telephone (202) 488-5300, facsimile (202) 488-5563, TTY (202) 488-5562, email fcc@bcpiweb.com.

For further information regarding this matter, contact Jeannie Benfaida, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (202) 418-2313 or Jeannie.Benfaida@fcc.gov.

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